THE VISIONS OF Sir Heiſter Ryley: WITH OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS.

Wednesday February 21. 1710.

From my Houſe in St. James's Square, *February* 20.

I Had no ſooner drawn my Curtain this Morning to ſee whether it was break of Day, but I got up and went to my Desk to look over the Copy of my laſt Viſion, which wanted ſome correcting. When I had read it over with much Intention of Thought, and made all the Amendments I could, I ſet my ſelf a very hard Task, which was to enquire into the new Diſcoveries that have been made, as they are related by Writers of our own and other Nations. Many of the Pieces I look'd into, the Notions are very extravagant, tho' they ſeem to ſhew the Wonders of Nature in an uncommon Dreſs. The Authors ſay, you may behold in Foreign Countries on the Bark of Trees through a Microſcope Animals in human Shape no bigger than a Pin's Head, haunted by other Creatures of a much ſmaller ſize, and that Millions of Species ſubſiſt on a green Leaf, who walk about it as ſo many Dwarfs on a wide Plain. It is eaſy for them to pick out of an Oak Woods and Forreſts, and give the Hiſtory of ſeveral Creatures creeping on the ſingle Thread of a Spider. Theſe Virtuoſo's can be preſent at the cutting up of a Body ſo ſmall as the Point of a Needle, and obſerve the Palpitation of the Heart, the Courſe of the Blood, the working of the Muſcles, and the Convulſions in the Limbs, with great Accuracy and Improvement. It would be needleſs to mention what ſhoals of ſmall Monſters they behold taking their Paſtime in a Vial of Vinegar after it has been ſet in the Sun for ſome time, or to ſpeak of the Myriads of Beings they ſee floating in thoſe little Seas of Juices that are contained in the ſeveral Veſ-

ſels of an Irrational Body. Theſe are very mean and inſignificant Fancies upon the Works of the Creation, and have ſcarce any thing in them but a beautiful Stile, and Humour of ſomething that is Novel and odd. There is indeed abundance of Curioſity to be obſerved in the Shapes and Actions of many little Inſects when they are alive; but not in ſuch as are ſo very minute, eſpecially after they are dead, and their Particles ſeparated. To look into the different Virtue of Plants gives Matter for vaſt Speculation. For when I have been at any time out upon that Enquiry, I wanted no Objects for my Improvement, every Garden and Plat I came to afforded me a ſtock ſufficient to ſet up a ſmall Diſpenſatory. I could diſtill from almoſt every Herb and Weed Drops proper for the Cure of ſome particular Wound or Diſeaſe; and after all this there is ſtill remaining an inexhauſtible ſtore of Treaſure in many Vegetables, the Uſe and Vertue of which are not yet known. As ſoon as I had gone through theſe intricate Leſſons with ſome Difficulty. I reſolved to draw a Model ſuitable to the ſeveral different Schemes that had taken me up all this Study to reviſe. The next Day early I entred into a ſtrict ſearch of what Nature has thought fit to lay in our way, and ſeems induſtrious to have us enquire into, and what things ſhe has purpoſely hid out of ſight. All that is viſible to the Eye are Images pencil'd forth in perfect Strokes, which reſemble Infinite, in ſuch Figures as all the Art of Human Invention is not capable to caſt the leaſt Stain upon the ſmalleſt of them. All the Forenoon I applied my ſelf with great Severity on Subjects of this kind; and in the Evening went to inquire into thoſe tranſparent Miracles, that ſome of the Ancients have ranged all over the inhabited World to find out, but could only meet with them ſhadowed forth in dim Lights. This Work ſeemed to be ſo very agreeable to my Temper, that at laſt it produced an unuſual Dream, if I may call it ſuch; for I cannot certainly tell what it was, by reaſon the Sun had been for ſome Hours ſet, and my Thoughts were wholly taken up on very abſtruſe Points. Be it what it will, I was entertained with ſo clear a Proſpect of an endleſs Scene of Matter, as if I had ſeen a new Creation of Wonders weav'd out to me in the Loom of Nature. I fancied I ſaw the Azure Sky crowded with the ſame glorious Lamps which I had been lately contemplating upon. I was looking very attentively on a Star towards the Eaſt, when on a ſudden there appeared a b'azing Light as if the Heavens were all of a Flame. Upon its abating, the great Luminary came forth of his private Chamber at Midnight, with all the Emblems of Beauty about him, ſhining in his full Strength, and ſpoke to me after a very odd manner. I am (ſays he) of a purer Subſtance than the Earth, and compos'd of Particles which never ſwim'd in the Floods that were diſperſed about the black Chaos. Upon my being advanced into the unknown Depth of the Firmament, I was ordered immediately to go my limited Circuit, where I met in my firſt three Days Progreſs Multitudes of Beings juſt formed, peeping forth of the dark Womb of Obſcurity, in their full growth, endued with Senſe. They all inſtantly entered upon Action, with as much Experience as if they had been acquainted with the Buſineſs of the World for a whole Age. What with their diverſity of Shapes, Activity and Labour, I ſaw preſented to me an Art more curious than I could ſee in the framing of that part of the Creation wherein they moved. But things of this ſort are not the occaſion of my Viſit. There is a vaſt number of Objects lodged in the long Tract of Heavens which you cannot

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view to any Perfection, that have divine Leſſons of the ſupreme Eſſence deſcribed on every Part of them. I who am of a clear ſight can make what Obſervations I pleaſe, I have divided them, and ſtill open them, and ſtill diſcover new Wonders of Providence. It may be you are ſtartled at what I ſay, but I muſt tell you that there are many other ſhining Spheres which I can only diſcern at a vaſt diſtance glimmering like ſmall Sparkles of Fire aſcending upwards, which if you could ſuit your Notions, as I can, to their Dimenſions, you might ſee one Apartment within another, and ſo proceed as long as you think fit to continue your Diſquiſition. If theſe things appear extravagant and ridiculous, it is becauſe you live remote from ſuch Miracles, and your blunt and groſs Organs of Senſe are not capable of retaining Ideas that come ſo near to Perfection. I told him my Mind was fill'd with a ſecret Delight, and I could frame prodigious Schemes to my ſelf of the large extent of thoſe diſtant Creations, but I feared I ſhould be laugh'd at if I went about to broach ſuch Opinions as Precepts to be believed by others. Your Remarks (ſays he) are very right, and I muſt allow that what I ſpeak of the mighty Wonders in the upper Regions, only ſuits ſuch who very artfully contract within the Compaſs of their Fancies, thoſe great Objects of Admiration, with a Deſign to inſtill them into the Minds of others by a kind of inſenſible Advancement of Inſtruction. I deſired him to furniſh me with ſomething more ſuitable to a general Approbation, and ſpeak of his own Performances. Your Reaſon tells you (ſays he) there is no Trace in the Book of Nature that appears to you, which repreſents a more glorious Figure than my ſelf, though it's ſtrange to ſee the Clouds and the Rain frequently over-ſhadowing my flaming Orb, which gives by its Heat and Influence many Creatures their firſt Shapes ſo as they come to be ſo ſtrong and mighty as to climb up Hills and Trees, and perform the little Actions of Play and Eating. I ſhall paſs over mentioning my bringing forth out of the Earth from Acorns and ſmall Seeds, Woods, Forreſts, Winding Mazes, Beds of Painted Flowers, Garlands of Roſes, and Bowers of Jeſſamies, entangled over with Amaranths, and only ſpeak of two things which are very extraordinary; neither of them having ever fell out above once in my whole Travels. The firſt was my being unexpectedly ſtopt in my Courſe, which was a great Surprize to the Hiſtorians, who have very judiciouſly ſet down that Incident in their largeſt Pieces of Antiquity in Capital Letters. The ſecond Obſtacle that I muſt not omit, I was forced to go back and bring again my Shadow, which was gone down ten degrees on the Dial. My total Eclipſe which was ſo very remarkable, is ſo well known that I ſhall ſpeak nothing of it, only that I was then abaſh'd, and thought a Star look'd down from the Sky on the Earth with a much brighter Luſtre than my ſelf. As I was endeavouring to pierce into the utmoſt Spaces that had been deſcribed to me, the pleaſing Object vail'd it ſelf in Darkneſs; I was left alone, and could ſee no Appearance in the Sky of any Being whatſoever. At laſt I heard great Murmurings in the Air, as if there had been many Voices contending for Precedency, when on a ſudden a rich Scene of Nature was open'd to me, adorned with Multitudes of Images, which fill'd my Mind with a ſacred Pleaſure (if I may be allowed that Expreſſion.) As ſoon as I had ſtrengthened my ſight to the utmoſt of my Ambition I ſaw the Moon, with the reſt of the wandering Planets, came forth of their Houſes, diſputing very earneſtly which of them ſhould be the Leader of the Com-

Company. When they had ſetled that Ceremony, they began to diſcourſe me in very familiar Terms about the ſeveral Productions of Nature, that cannot be diſcovered, by reaſon of their vaſt diſtance, with the help of a Teleſcope. Your Philoſophers (ſay they) make Diſſections upon humane Bodies to ſee how they are contrived, and think when they have unravell'd that Myſtery, they have attained to abundance of Knowledge; but were they to make ſuch narrow Inſpections into the great number of Objects that are confined within the Limits of our Circles, they would look upon all they have hitherto found out to be little trifling Nicities, ſcarce worthy their Obſervation. What you underſtand of our mutable Revolutions, the diſtinct Stations we belong to, and the particular Signs and Names we are diſtinguiſhed by, is very imperfect, and many of the Notions are altogether extravagant. There is ſomething ſo fine and intricate in the Particles we are compoſed of, that would puzzle all your Thoughts to find out the curious Contextures of them. I muſt own (ſaid I) that what you ſay is more edifying than a Preacher, yet they are Subjects too nice for ſuch as never fram'd an Idea of the Beautiful Perfections that lie concealed in the upper part of the Creation, which the bare muſing upon them ſets forth to Men of Judgment, the great Wiſdom and Art viſible in the hidden Secrets of the Infinite. They were returning me an Anſwer, but before they came to the Concluſion of it, what with the diverſity of Languages, and Variety of Subjects, which I fancied to be very charming as well as loud, I got up to reach my Pen and Ink to write down ſome particular Paſſages, when unexpectedly, I found my ſelf alone in my Chamber, with only a Ruſh Candle burning at the Bed-ſide. I call'd up my Man, and aſked him whether any Company had been in the Room. Being anſwered in the Negative, I was much ſurpriſed, becauſe I thought I had been engaged almoſt five Hours in viewing and diſcourſing with prodigious Multitudes of high-born Beings, about very conſpicuous Matters. As ſoon as I was dreſs'd, and found out perfectly that this was only the Fruits of my own Natural Fancy, I caſt away from me all that was too copious for my Memory to retain, and went to collect what Heads might gain me ſome Proſelytes; yet I could not believe there was any ſeed of Vanity in thoſe meer Shades of my Thoughts, which were ſo very intricate, as would offend any who think it the moſt agreeable Task imaginable to be frequently practiſing in the retired Studies of Nature, where every Genius is not capable of entring. For the Notions may ſerve as Guides to lead ſuch Students thro' both Hemiſpheres, diverſified with Suns, Stars, Lamps and Tapers, ſeated one above another, and going up to ſo prodigious a height, that ſcarce all our framed Ideas can reach or paſs to the end of them. If any of the Periods in this and the three laſt Papers on the Works of the Creation for confuting Atheiſm, appear too long, and the Thread of them ſpun out ſomewhat of the ſmalleſt, it will be eſteemed ſo by none but thoſe who imagine what they can't ſee, to be nothing more than Fields of Riddles painted out in ſtrange Colours, or as an Aſſembly of Monſters hid in Embryo's. Such Men look upon the Pieces that ſtand fix'd in the immenſe Tract of the Heavens, through falſe Glaſſes, that preſent every Object walking about in blind Diſguiſes, and take all things of this Nature to be only Crowds of immaterial Shadows deſcribed in new kind of Forms, according to the variable Humours of the Author's Thoughts.

F I N I S.